

Apostolick Charity,

John ITS 
Nature and Excellence

CONSIDER'D.

IN A

DISCOURSE

Upon Dan. 12. 3.

Preached at St. Pauls, Decemb. 19. 1697.
at the Ordination of some Protestant Missionaries to be sent into the Plantations.

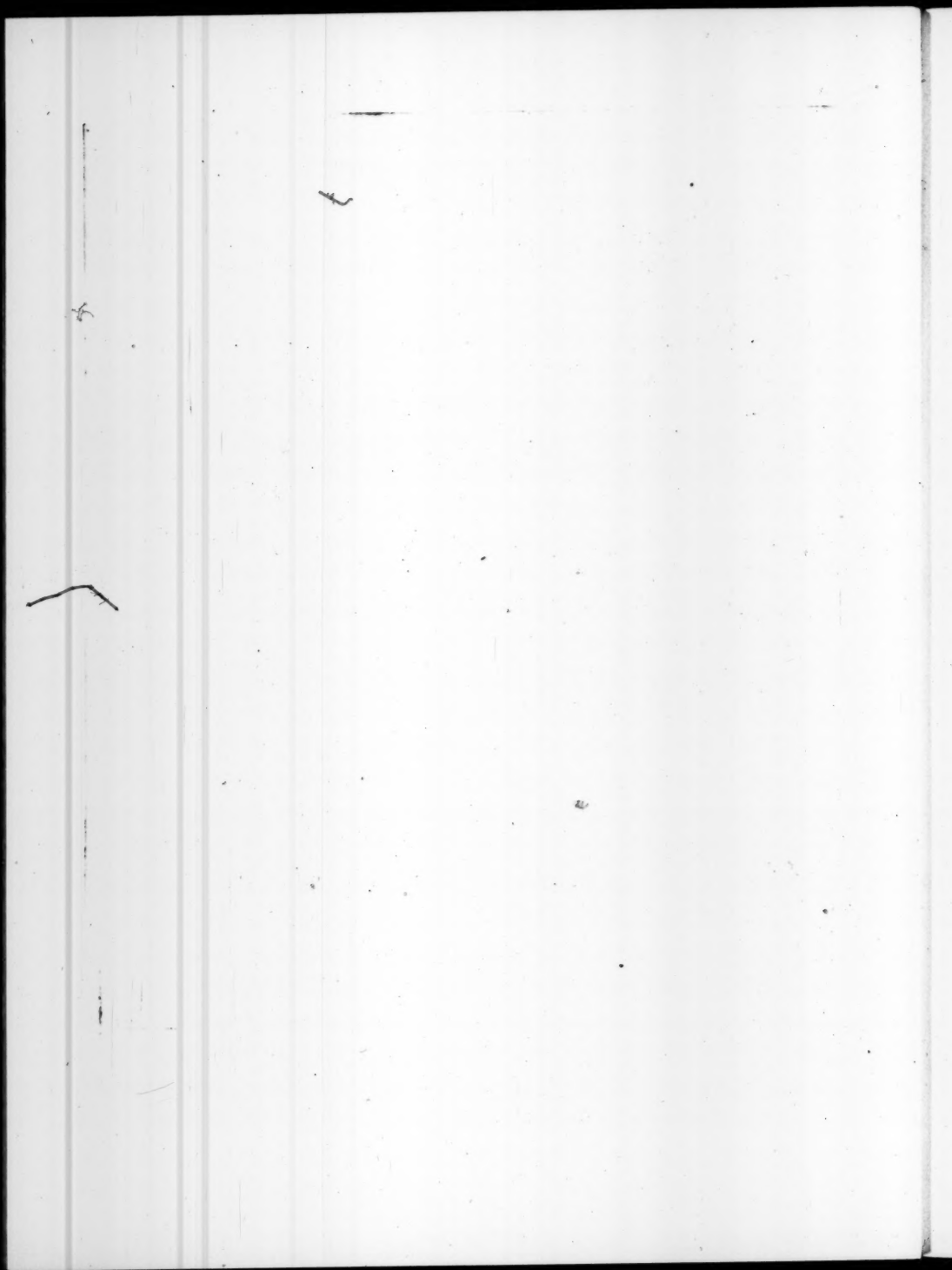
To which is Prefixt,

A General View of the English Colonies in America, with respect to Religion; In order to shew what Provision is wanting for the Propagation of Christianity in those Parts.

By Thomas Bray, D. D.

L O N D O N,

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A GENERAL VIEW
OF THE
English Colonies in America,
With Respect to
RELIGION.

In order to shew what Provision is wanting for
the Propagation of *Christianity* in Those Parts.

Colonies.	Parishes & Churches	Ministers	Libraries
I. <i>New found land</i> Hath 5 or 6 English Set- tlements, wherein are near 500 Families con- sistly upon the Islands, besides the great Num- bers of Ships and Seamen, who put in at Fishing- Seasons.			
II. <i>New-England.</i>	Well provided for the Propagation of Reli- gion in the <i>Independent</i> Way, having 110 Churches, together with an University; as also a Fund for the Propagation of the Faith amongst the Na- tive <i>Indians</i> . There is also 1 Church at <i>Boston</i> after the Church of <i>England</i> Form.	1 Minister. 1 Assistant.	1 Library.

Colonies.

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Colonies.	Parishes & Churches	Ministers	Libraries
III. <i>New-York.</i>	1 Church in the Fort. 1 Church in the City. 2 Dutch Churches. 1 French Church.	1 Minister in the Fort. 1 Minister in the City. 3 Dutch Ministers. 1 French Minister. Not 1 Church of England Minister, tho' much desired in the English Part. 3 Dutch Ministers in the West-part.	1 Library.
1. <i>Long-Island</i> <small>A populous Colony under the same Government as New-York, lying in the East-part to English-Towns, wherein are computed above 200 Families; and in the West-part 9 Dutch-Towns, wherein are upwards of 500 Families.</small>	13 Churches.		
2. <i>Albany,</i> A large City, consisting of 400 Families, bordering upon the <i>Indians</i> , and belonging to the Government of <i>New York.</i>	1 Church in the Fort for the Garrison, consisting of 2 Foot-Companies, and the English Inhabitants of the Town. 1 Dutch Church. 1 French Church. 1 Swedish Church.	1 Dutch Minister. 1 French Minister. 1 Swedish Minister.	
IV. <i>East New Jersey</i>	In <i>East-Jersey</i> there are 8 Towns, no Church.	1 Minister going over	A Library begun.
V. <i>West</i>	In this Province there are also several Towns.		
VI. <i>Pennsylvania.</i>	1 Church at <i>Philadelphia</i> , having a considerable Number of Church of England Protestants.	1 Minister. 1 School-Master.	1 Library.

Colonies.

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	Colonies.	Parishes & Churches	Ministers	Libraries
VII.	Mary-Land	30 Parishes, but meanly Endow'd, the Country being but lately divided into Parishes, and the Churches but lately built, to the great Charge of the present Governour Colonel <i>Nicholson</i> , and the Country.	16 Ministers.	16 Libraries.
VIII.	Virginia.	50 Parishes, with 100 Churches & Chapels. There is also a Noble College now Erected, and Endow'd by His present Majesty and the late Queen; and carry'd on from the first Foundation with the great Charge, Application, and Management of Colonel <i>Nicholson</i> , and the other Trustees and Governours thereof.	30 Ministers.	
IX.	North Carolina.	1 Church lately built at	1 Minister	1 Library.
X.	South Carolina.	Charles-Town.	going over	
XI.	Bermudas.	8 Tribes or Parishes, where in are 9 Churches, and near 1000 Families.	3 Ministers	3 Libraries
XII.	Bahama Islands, viz.			
	1. Providence.	Has 80 Families with 1 Church lately built.	1 Minister.	
	2. Eleutheria.	Has about 20 Families.		

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	Colonies.	Parishes & Churches	Ministers	Libraries
	3. <i>Antigua.</i>	Has several Families.		
XIII.	<i>Jamaica.</i>	15 Parish-Churches.	3 Ministers	2 Libraries begun.
XIV.	<i>Anguilla.</i>	A poor Island, having several English upon it, but not able of themselves to build a Church, nor maintain a Minister.		
XV.	<i>St. Christopher's.</i>	6 Parish-Churches.	1 Minister.	1 Library begun.
XVI.	<i>Antego.</i>	5 Churches.	3 Ministers	1 Library begun.
XVII.	<i>Mevis.</i>	3 Parish-Churches.	3 Ministers	1 Library begun.
XVIII.	<i>Montserrat.</i>	3 Parish-Churches.	3 Ministers	
XIX.	<i>Barbados.</i>	14 Parish-Churches.	14 Ministers.	
XX.	<i>St. Vincents.</i>			

1. By what goes before it may appear, That several of our Colonies do want Churches and Parishes, and that one half at least of the Parishes want Ministers.

2. By Experience, as well as the Reason of the Thing, I'm convinc'd, That 100*l.* laid out in a LIBRARY, is what will best induce a Learned and Sober Minister to go into the Service

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vice of any part of the Church in the Plantations; And that the same is a necessary Encouragement, considering that few Men of Fortunes, who are able to purchase Books for themselves, will go into such remote Parts.

3. By what goes before it may also appear, That merely the settling of LIBRARIES in the several Parishes of each Province will require a very considerable Fund, Fifty Pounds worth of Books being the least that can be suppos'd requisite to enable a Minister to discharge the Duties of his Function. Besides that, in the Chief Town in each Province it would be requisite to have a Library of more Universal Learning, for the Service and Encouragement of those who shall launch out farther in the pursuit of Useful Knowledge, as well Natural as Divine.
4. Besides LIBRARIES of Necessary Books in Divinity, for the Use of the Clergy, it will be requisite, in order to propagate Christian Faith and Manners, to furnish the respective Ministers with some Numbers of Bibles, Catechisms, Common-Prayers, and other Practical and Devotional Pieces, to distribute *gratis*, especially in poorer Families.

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5. It will be farther requisite to have free Schools erected, at leastwise one in every County, for the Education of their Children: And it would, in a more especial manner, become the Professors of so Excellent a Religion as ours, to have a Provision made in one or two Schools at leastwise, in every Province, for the Instruction of half a dozen Indian Youth, to be sent afterwards amongst their own People, to civilize and convert them.

Thus, in short, I have endeavoured to give a *General View* of the State of the Plantations, with respect to Religion, and to hint at what is wanting to promote it: And from this very slender View how easie is it to see, and with what Indignation can we behold, how many *English* Colonies there are, the Trade of one whereof is sometimes computed to be worth 500000*l.* per *Annum* to this Nation, in which there is no Church, nor Preacher, nor Publick Worship, nor Sacraments administred. The Mahometan does not so little regard his false Prophet. He no sooner gains any new Province, but he erects his Moschs, and places the Crescent upon the top of them, to intimate that his Religion shall increase, or it is not his fault. And the Papists, we do well know, spare no Cost in sending their Missions into
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all the parts of the known World. And it is very worthy our Notice, that the *Dutch East-India Company* do Yearly expend, and that with great Success, 15000*l. per Annum* in the *East-Indies* alone, for the Maintaining and Propagating the Christian Faith. And now, that so little should be yet done, so much as to preserve in Being that *Pure and Unde- fil'd Religion* which we profess, even in those Colonies of *English Men*, from whence the whole Kingdom has been so much Enrich'd, as well the *Gentleman*, by the Advance of his *Rents*, as the *Merchant*, by the Increase of his *Stores*, and the *Mechanick*, by the Vending of his *Manufactures*, is truly an amasing, as well as a melancholy Consideration to such as have any true Love to God, or the Souls of Men.

But, alas! how few are there amongst us who do in the least reflect upon, or at all value the inestimable Advantages which, above the rest of the World, they enjoy by being Christians. It is now an indifferent thing with many what Religion Mankind is of; so that, according to those Men, the Son of God did in vain descend from Heaven; and that grand Dispensation of the Gospel, and that Mystery of our Redemption, the Wisdom and Goodness of which the Blessed Angels do with Admiration adore, was to little purpose, and might have been as well spar'd, for that the Heathens are
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in as good a Condition as we. Nay, *Christ Crucify'd* is now become, as well as formerly, to some, a *Stumbling-Block*; to many, *Foolishness*, even the Subject of their Ridicule and Raillery. And these cannot but be look'd upon as Ominous presages of some heavy Judgments upon us; for as an ingenious Person doth singularly well observe, *Whenever a Country loses that Reverence that is due to Religion, and the Laws, we may safely pronounce that its Ruine is not very distant.*

And as Contempt of Religion and the Laws is a sure mark of a declining Nation; so new Colonies and Societies of Men must soon fall to pieces, and dwindle to nothing, unless their Governours and Magistrates interpose, to season betimes the Minds of such a new People with a sence of Religion, and with good and vertuous Principles.

These are Sentiments, I know, quite different from the Politicks of some Men, But those who heartily believe God and his Providence, are firmly perswaded, that the Happiness and Well-being of any People does advance, or decline, in proportion to the Supports that are given, and the Regards that are paid to *True Religion*.

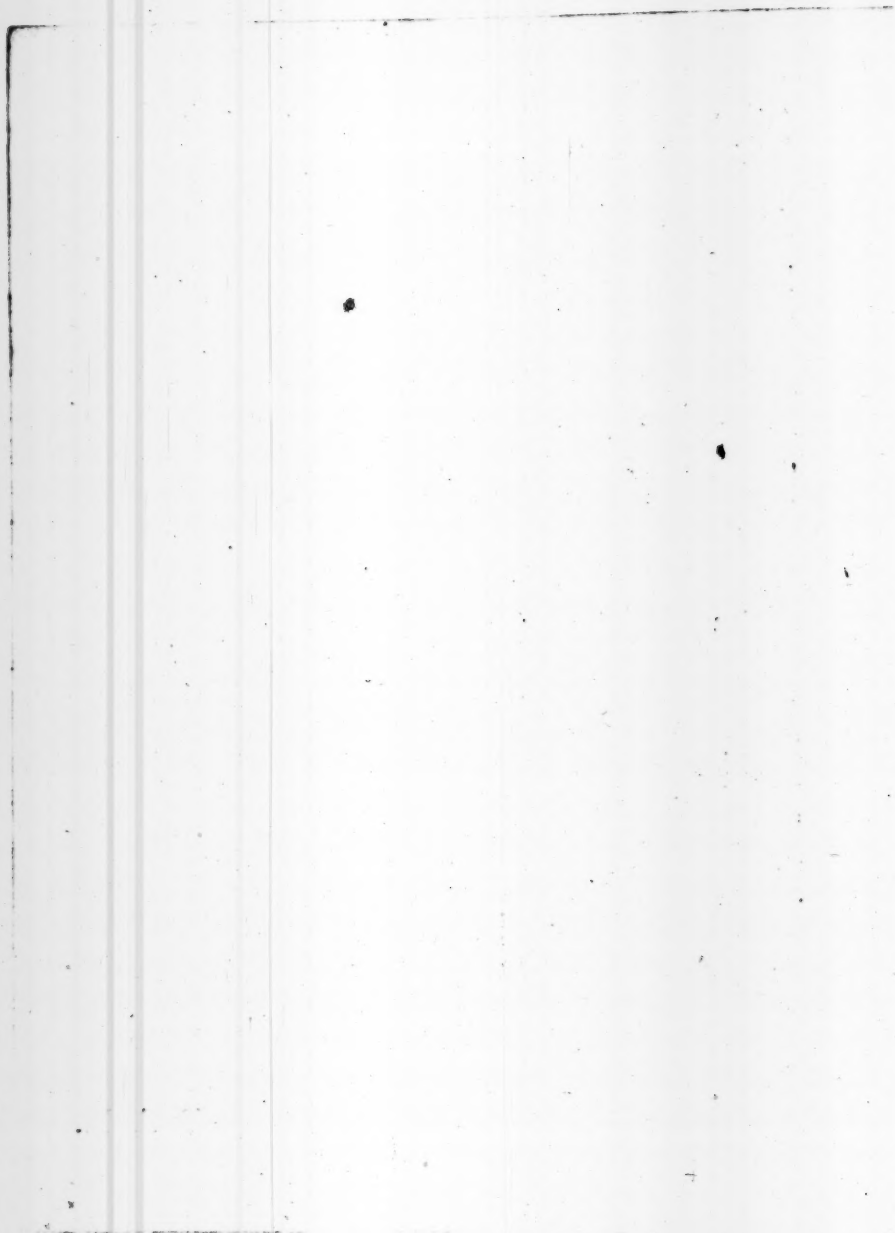
And I must with Gratitude acknowledge, that some such I have met with in the Prosecution of this Design, which I have engaged in for the *Plantations*,

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tations, or else the Expence, as well as the Fateigue, had been wholly insupportable. But as what has been hitherto done, does but let me into the View of so much more, which is still wanting to Propagate and Maintain Christianity in those Parts, so after that my Expectations of a more Publick Provision for this great Work have fail'd me, I must again renew my Applications to such Pious Persons who have a just Value of the Worth of their own, and others Souls. And if the following Discourse upon the Nature and Excellency of this kind of Charity above all others, shall contribute any thing to promote the Design, I shall obtain an End, to accomplish which I could be content to sacrifice my Life, with the Remainder of my small Fortunes; and those worthy Persons will doubtless find it upon their Accompt, when to be found a good Steward, to the Honour and Glory of God, of the Talents which He has given, will afford them those superlative Degrees of Joy, which are beyond the Imagination of us here below to conceive, and which therefore the following *Discourse* does not pretend so much as to shadow.

D A N.



DAN. XII. 3.

*They that be wise shall shine as the
brightness of the Firmament, and they
that turn many to Righteousness, as
the Stars for ever and ever.*

THIS, and the two preceding Verses are a Prophecy of the future State of the Church, at the two great Advents of our Saviour to it. In the *first* Verse is foretold, what dreadful Distresses and Difficulties it should struggle with. In the *second* and *third*, are declared, what inexpressible Rewards will Crown the Labours of Christ's Faithful Servants, especially of those who have been Instrumental in the Instruction and Conversion of Mankind. *They that be wise*, or Teachers, or Instructors, as some render it, *shall shine as the*, &c. In my Enlargement upon which Words, I shall do these four things.

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First, I will shew you what is meant by turning many to Righteousness.

Secondly, Who they are that have, whose Duty yet it is, and who may still be said to turn many to Righteousness.

Thirdly, That it will be found one Day the highest pitch of Wisdom to have been Instrumental in this blessed Work. Because,

Fourthly, and Lastly, Such shall be the most gloriously Rewarded. It is they that shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.

And, First, I will shew what is meant by turning many to Righteousness. Now Righteousness, in the strictest sence of the Word, does denote only one Vertue amongst the whole Train of Christian Graces, namely, Justice and Equity betwixt Man and Man. But in its more comprehensive Acceptation, (and so it is generally to be understood throughout the Scriptures) it does import no less than the whole of that Religion, which will render us accepted by God, and in which, if we be found, when we come to die, God will pass a favourable Sentence upon us at the Day of Judgment.

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And such a Righteousness, as it is now fixt, and stated under the Gospel, consists in this, that in the first place we *Renounce the Devil and all his Works*, that is, abandon the Service of that Arch-Rebel the Devil, and detest and forsake all his Works of Sin. He having himself most ungratefully Revolted from God, has not only carry'd whole Legions of fallen Angels into a curst Rebellion against their Creator, but has drawn off the far greatest part of Mankind into the same wicked Apostacy with himself; insomuch, that divide the whole Earth into thirty Parts, it is computed by skilful Geographers, that nineteen of it are Inhabited by Idolaters, that is, Men ignorant of the true God; and in effect worshippers of Devils: Not to say what Idolatrous, and other destructive Heresies he has brought into Christendom it self, and even in those Churches of Christ where God is best known, the Christian Faith the best understood, and Christianity profess'd in its greatest Purity. It is a sorrowful Consideration, how much the Works of the Devil, Magick, Sorcery, Lying, Perjury, Uncleaness, Murder, Rapine, and Violence, and indeed, all manner of Wickedness, are confidently and openly committed and avow'd. And now a most considerable part of

that Righteousness we are here upon consists in this, That we abandon the wicked Party of Satan's Adherents, either Foreign or Domestick; and that being listed in the Service of the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we give up our selves to his Government and Obedience. And this is that so material a part of Righteousness, call'd *Repentance from dead Works*, Heb. vi. 1.

A second part of this Righteousness is Faith, that is, the Knowledge and Belief of God in his Nature and Attributes, and a firm practical Belief of Christ the *only Begotten Son of God*, as the great Mediator betwixt God and Man, who, to that End, having took upon him our Nature, was Invested with the threefold Office of a *Prophet*, to instruct us in the way to be Reconciled to God; of a *Priest*, to satisfy his Justice for all our past Offences; and of a *King*, to Conduct and Govern us; and finally, to Reward us for all our Services. *This also is Life eternal*, or another part of that Righteousness for which we shall be Rewarded with Life Eternal, *Thus to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*, John xvii. 3.

A third is, to *Obey God's Holy Will and Commandments*, and to walk in the same all the Days of our Life, that is, having abandon'd the Service
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of Satan, and yielded our selves up to the Faith of Christ, the Completion of our Righteousness will be this, to live the remaining part of our Lives to the Honour of God, by paying him a faithful Obedience to all his most Just and Righteous Commands. And *Blessed are they who do his Commandments, for they only shall have right to the Tree of Life*, Rev. xxii. 14. Thus, in short, you see the state of that Righteousness, upon the account of which we shall be justifi'd and sav'd.

And now it will be easie to understand, what it is to *Turn many to Righteousness*. And in the highest and most exalted sence of the Phrase, it is to Reduce whole Provinces under the Obedience of God. It is to rescue that unhappy part of Mankind, which have for so many Ages past, labour'd under the Tyranny of Satan; it is to reduce them to the just and happy Government of their rightful Lord and Master Jesus Christ. It is to Instruct those Dark Corners of the Earth, in which the Light of the Gospel has not yet shone, or but very dimly: It is to enlighten them with a full and bright Knowledge of their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And it is lastly, to render them obsequious Servants to a just and holy God, *whose Service is perfect freedom*:
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It is, I say, to divest them of that Inhumanity, Savageness, and Brutality, whereby they are Beasts of Prey to each other, and to stamp upon their Souls that lovely Image of God, consisting in Knowledge, Faith, Love, and Purity, whereby they will become Angels, nay, God's, one to another. This is to *Turn many to Righteousness*, in the highest Sence of the Phrase: But in a Lower, yet a very Noble Sence, it is to be any ways Instrumental in the Instruction and Conversion of any Considerable number of Souls in any part of the World, as well within the Christian Pale as elsewhere: Within the Christian Pale, I say, where, God knows, there is still that Ignorance, Profaneness, and Immorality, which loudly call for more Labourers into the Vineyard, to carry on to Perfection the Information and Conversion of Christians. And in both these Senses

Secondly, *Who they are who have heretofore, whose Duty yet it is, and who may still be said to Turn many to Righteousness*, is the second thing I propos'd to shew you. And here we are to consider, that as the Apostacy of Mankind from God began soon after the Creation, so God had his Ministers from the very beginning contesting with

with the Powers of Darkness, and with all possible Application rescuing Mankind out of the *Snares of the Devil*, as *Abel*, *Seth*, *Enos*, and *Noah* before the Flood; which last, for his eminent and painful, tho' unsuccessful Services in this great Work, was call'd the *Preacher of Righteousness*, 2 Pet. ii. 5.

Nor did either the Occasion for the like Preachers of Righteousness cease, even after the dreadful Destruction by an universal Deluge; nor was God afterwards wanting to his own Honour, or the Good of Mankind, in sending his Prophets and Priests to be Preachers of Righteousness to a wicked World.

It was but very few Centuries after the Flood, that the whole Earth was again Revolted from God, and overspread with Wickedness; and it was not without a constant Succession of Priests and Prophets, as well as of Mercies and Destructions, that the Divine Providence did secure one only Nation, the *Jews*, in their Allegiance to him. And yet even these his *peculiar People*, *This Holy Nation*, in process of Time, had so corrupted themselves, that *their very Righteousness was as filthy Rags*, *Isai. lxiv. 6.* And both their Principles and Morals were so far debas'd, and the most demure and precise amongst them, the
Scribe

Scribes and Pharisees so defective in both, that our Saviour told his Disciples, *Except their Righteousness should exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. v. 20.

And now when the Defection of Mankind from God was become so Universal, that it was time for him, either utterly to root out from the face of the Earth, all the Inhabitants of it, or he had no other way but by some Miracle of Mercy to Reform it; Then did the Divine Goodness, which always enclines him to the most Merciful part, choose to send an Ambassador Extraordinary to propose Terms of Reconciliation, and to invite Mankind home to God. And accordingly, God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, did in these last Days, (or in the last great Age of the World) speak unto us by his Son, whom he appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the World, Heb. i. 1, 2.

And here, how without Wonder and Astonishment, can we behold, with what prodigious Zeal, Application, and Industry the Blessed Jesus set upon the great Work of Reforming Mankind. It was *his Meat and Drink*

to do the Will of him that sent him, and accordingly he continually went about doing Good, both to the Bodies and Souls of Men. To their Bodies, by Healing them of all those manifold and mighty Distempers that had then invaded them: To their Souls, by Curing them of those most fatal Maladies of all, their Sins; to rid them of which, was so much the main and principal Design of his coming into the World, that from hence he was denominated a Saviour to it; And they shall call his Name Jesus, for he shall heal his People from their Sins. But the Original cause of all their Miseries, both Bodily and Spiritual, proceeding from the mischievous Enmity of Satan, he did with the utmost diligence pursue that Rebel, driving him out of the Bodies and Souls of Men; both which he had so universally Usurp'd, and did at that time so cruelly Tyrannize over.

And that he might at length be utterly dispossest'd of all his Dominion, and that no Corner of the Earth might be left him to exercise his Tyranny upon, when the Blessed Jesus was leaving the World himself, in pursuance of that *Power which was given unto him in Heaven, and on Earth*, he Commission'd his Apostles to prosecute the glorious Conquest over the Devil,

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and all his Works, which he had begun, commanding them to go, and disciple all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, promising to be with them always, even unto the end of the World, Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. And so faithful were they in the Execution of their Trust, that they soon dispers'd themselves into the utmost parts of the Universe, so that not an Age had past, till their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World, Rom. x. 18. And thus you see who they are that have heretofore Turn'd many to Righteousness.

But who those are, whose Duty yet it is, and who may still be said to do the same, remains to be consider'd, and may God enable us to find them out.

And, First, This is a Work incumbent upon every Christian Church and Nation; but ought to be the Concern and Care of none more than ours, and can never be more seasonably set upon than at such a juncture as this. I say, to consider, and assist in the best Methods of Turning many to Righteousness, ought to be the Care and Concern of every Christian Church and Nation; and

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and this out of a grateful Return for that Blessed Light of the Gospel which has shone amongst them, by which Christians are, or may be, (if they suffer themselves to be regulated by the Rules of Christianity, which so directly tend to render both private Persons and publick Societies happy) by which Christians may be, I say, so much distinguish'd from the deplorable State of those Barbarous and Savage Nations, where Ignorance of the True God and Religion overspreads their Country. Nothing more naturally diffuses its self than Light, and how prodigiously ungrateful would it be for a People themselves enlighten'd, not to spread that to all Mankind which was given them to shew others, as well as themselves, the Way to God, and their Happiness!

But especially this is a Care and Concern incumbent upon such a Church and Nation as ours. A Church so pure in its Doctrine, and so Heavenly in its Worship, as in that respect is the fittest in the World to be the Model to the New Acquisitions which shall be gain'd to the Church of Christ. But, alas, that it should be ever said, that another Church, whose Religion is so sadly corrupted by *Paganish* Superstitions, should yet be ten thousand times more

Zealous, in Banishing Infidelity and Paganism out of the World than ours is!

And it is a Work in Gratitude due from such a Nation as this: A Nation so enrich'd by the Commerce and Commodities of so many Barbarous and Pagan Countries. Surely, *since we have in so plentiful a manner been made partakers of their Carnal Things, it is our Duty also to Minister to them in Spiritual things.*

And such a Work surely can never be more Seasonably promoted by any Church or Nation, than at such a juncture as this. What has made up so great a part of our Devotions, for some Years past, as our Thanksgivings for the little less than Miraculous Deliverances we have receiv'd, in the Preservation of our Religion and Liberties?

And when had this our Preservation so glorious a Completion, as at this time? and so solemn an Acknowledgment paid to Heaven for it, as lately in this Place? But what fulsome Hypocrisie would it be to thank God with such seeming Devotion, for the Preservation of a Religion we do not in the least Value? or, How can we be thought to Value it at all, if when it is in our Power to extend the Christian Pale so far as we may, and to the bringing into it so many Thousand Souls,
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over whom we have an absolute Dominion, should we yet take no Care about it?

Secondly, Those whose Duty it is in a more peculiar Manner than others, to *Turn many to Righteousness*, are the Ministers of Religion; I say, in a more *peculiar Manner* than others; for we are not only ordained and separated for this Work, but the Instructing, Inlightning, and Informing of the World, which is the Foundation of all Righteousness, is peculiarly the Pastors Province. I do call the Instilling of Divine Knowledge into the Minds of Men, the *Foundation of all Religion*: For why? Knowledge of the true Nature of God, and of all the parts of that Religion which is to be paid him, is a necessary Guide and Director to all Virtuous and Religious Practice, it being the same thing to the Soul, as the Eye is to the Body. Nor is Divine Knowledge necessary to Mens living Vertuously, only as it is a Guide and Director to us so to live, but it is requisite also, as it is the Principle and Reason whereon all virtuous and worthy Deeds are to be founded; insomuch, that a thing which is otherwise well done, if it be not done *knowingly*, but ignorantly, will not be imputed by God, nor Man, as a vertuous and laudable Action. Nay, the chiefest of all Divine Graces, if it be not acted
out

out of a through Knowledge of the Nature of God, and of true Religion, will e'en become, for want thereof, the Blackest of all Sins : as *Zeal*, when not guided by Knowledge, will easily be transported to Cruelty and Murther. What shall I say? The want of thoroughly understanding the true Nature of God, and the Nature and Design of the Christian Religion, is the only Cause of all that Superstition which is in the World; of Superstition I say, than which there is not a more grievous Malady that can possibly infect the Souls of Men, so as to render them more troublesome to themselves, more mischievous to the publick Good and Welfare of the Church, and to act more dishonourably and provoking to God. In short, it is Ignorance which is the Natural Parent of that Atheism and Infidelity so rise amongst Men; and indeed, not only of that, but of all other Vices and Wickednesses whatsoever.

And now it is the great Duty of the Ministers of Religion, to remove from the Minds of Men that Ignorance of Divine things, which is the cause of all their Miscarriages, and to instill into them those Doctrines and Religious Principles which are the Fountain of all their farther Righteousness. This we are to attend upon,
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by *Catechizing*, and *Preaching*, and *Conference*, and whatever Methods can be thought most successful and effectual in the Instruction of Mankind; and those who shall best instruct their People, shall most effectually *Turn many to Righteousness*: And therefore,

Thirdly, Those Persons will be reputed to have no small share in this Blessed Work, who have put the Ministers of God in a Capacity of so Instructing his People, by making a Provision for the Acquisition, Maintenance, and Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Such are those who have been the Founders of Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Libraries. And not here to speak of the Excellency of such Charities, which directly tending to the Everlasting Happiness of the Souls of Men, must be as far beyond what terminate only on this Mortal Life, as the Soul is more Excellent than the Body; and as an Eternal is to be preferred to a Temporal Felicity: But not to insist on this: The Advantage of being thus Instrumental in Turning many to Righteousness lies here, That it is not only in the present Generation, that such are thus serviceable to the Souls of Men, but in all Ages to come, and when they shall be long dead, they will yet speak, and so speak as to have

a Share in all the Conversions, which shall be made by Vertue, and through the Assistance of that Stock which they have laid up for the Promoting of Religion and Learning.

And especially, the Erecting of Libraries of necessary and useful Books in Divinity, is of all others a necessary Provision for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. For why? *The Priests Lips should preserve Knowledge, because the People are to seek the Law at his Mouth*, Mal. ii. 7. And the Measures of Knowledge a Minister is to be Master of, must be necessarily such as shall enable him to give his People an entire View of the whole Scheme of Christian Doctrine in that Connexion, wherein one part of it depends upon another, and for want of which, the Generality of Christians are so ignorant of the true Nature and Design of Christianity. Farther, a Pastor must thoroughly understand the Nature, Terms, and Conditions of the Covenant of Grace, and the Nature of Christ's Mediation, through which it was obtain'd. More particulary yet, he must be able clearly to explain, and fully to prove each Article of his Christian Faith; many of which not being obvious to our Natural Reason, but capable of Proof only from the Scriptures, he must be well vers'd in the Language,
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and Manner of Speaking of the Holy Pen-Men, before they can be so explain'd and prov'd. And he must be able to state exactly the Nature and Extent of Christian Duties, which Knowledge depending upon a right Understanding of the Nature, and different Obligations of all those many sorts of Laws, Natural, Divine, and Humane, which regulate and direct our Duties. This is a part of Knowledge as extensive as it is necessary.

All which Premises being duly consider'd, and withall, that we cannot now work Miracles, and that *Inspiration* is no part of our Talent; but that we are left to the Ordinary means of Converting the World; *namely*, the Common Measures of God's Holy Spirit accompanying our hard Study: It must therefore clearly follow, that those Persons will be reputed to have no small share in this Blessed Work, who shall lay such a Foundation of Christian Knowledge, as without which, Humanely speaking, it is not possible the Pastors of Christ's Church should feed their Flock with necessary Instruction.

Thirdly, And now I am to shew you, That it will be found one day the highest pitch of Wisdom to have been Instrumental in this Blessed Work of

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Turning many to Righteousness. It is the part of Wisdom to propose to it self a Good End, and then to pursue it by due and proper Means. And proportionably, as the End is more or less excellent, and the Means more or less adapted to carry it on; in the same degree is a Man's Wisdom to be judg'd greater or less with relation to it. Now here the End is incomparably excellent, beyond any other that can be nam'd. For why? to *Turn many to Righteousness* is, in effect; to consult, and that in the highest Manner, the Honour and Glory of God, and the greatest Good and Happiness of Mankind, than which nothing can be thought of more Excellent. To *Turn many to Righteousness*, you have also seen, is to dispossess Satan of an unrighteous Usurpation he has made upon God's Dominion over his own Creatures, and it is to reduce them under the Government of their Rightful Lord and Master. And can any thing be more glorious than such an Achievement? And it is so to rectifie the corrupt and sinful Nature of Men, and to bring them under the Direction of such Laws, as alone can make them happy: And what is it to be a Benefactor, if this be not?

Nor can any Means be more worthy and great, and better suited to the Purposes propos'd, than

than those we have consider'd. For let the whole Nation, let the Clergy, and such as have Wealth and Substance, set heartily about it, and the Work is done.

This, in short, is to be *wise to Salvation*, and alas! what is the Wisdom of this World in comparison with this? What an Idiot is David's Fool, who when he might *make to himself Friends in Heaven of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, heaps up to himself Riches, not knowing who shall gather them? And who is wholly solicitous to find out some one, from whom he might call his Lands after his own Name, (fondly thinking, that by this means his Houses shall continue for ever, and his Dwelling-Places to all Generations.). When by such Charities to the Souls of Men, as have been mentioned, he might provide that his Name be written in the Book of Life. Which brings me to the last thing propos'd; and shews, that to Turn many to Righteousness is the highest Wisdom, because that,

Fourthly, Such will be the most Gloriously rewarded. Besides, the Proposing of a Good End, and the Prosecuting of it by due and proper Means, there is something yet farther wanting to complete the Wisdom of our Actions, and

that is, to do all in the Prospect of an excellent Reward. And here, as the End, viz. the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind, is the most transcendently Glorious, and the Means propos'd in order to accomplish it, are what do most become Christians in their several Stations, and according to their several Abilities; so the Reward that will Crown all this, is here in my Text spoke to be such, as is not in the power of Words to express a greater. *They that are wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.*

And indeed, as of all other Sinners, those will be the most exquisitely punish'd, who shall any ways corrupt and deprave the Principles and Manners of Mankind: So of all the Righteous Servants of God, those will be exalted to the highest degrees of Glory, who shall be most industrious in the Instruction and Conversion of Men.

I say of all other Sinners, those will be the most exquisitely punish'd, who shall any ways corrupt and deprave the Principles and Manners of Mankind. Such as do sow ill Principles, and do any ways discourage and discountenance Piety and Vertue, are said to put a Stumbling-block, and to be an Occasion to fall in their Brother's way, Rom. xiv. 13. And so to that Man (saith our Saviour) by whom the

the Offence cometh: For whoſo ſhall offend one of the meanſt of theſe that believe in him, it were better for him that a Milſtone were hang'd about his Neck, and that he were drown'd in the depth of the Sea, Matt. xviii. 6, 7. And a moſt emphatical Threatning this is to all thoſe wicked Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs abroad in the World, who make it their Buſineſs, and ſeem to be intent upon this very thing. It is ſad enough to have one ſelf done or acted wickedly: But whoſoever ſhall not only break, tho' it be one of the leaſt Commandments; but ſhall teach Men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matt. v. 19. that is, none at all: He ſhall be caſt out of it, and puniſh'd as one of thoſe who are the greateſt Enemies to it. There is in the Words a vaſt deal more to be underſtood than is expreſs'd, as is uſual, both in the Sacred Writings, and in profane Authors; ſo that the Caſe of thoſe Men is moſt dreadfully and deſperately bad, who by profane, atheiſtical, and lewd Diſcourſe, or whatever other evil Communications do, corrupt good Principles and Manners. But above all others, it is a dreadful thing to conſider what will be the Doom of thoſe Men, who by wicked Books, ſuch as both *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, *Socijans*, and *Antinomians* do now, to the Re-
proach.

proach of our Church and Nation, daily publish amongst us. It is dreadful, I say, to consider what will befall such in the End. What Evil of this Nature is done only by Discourse, is but transiently bad, and may ruine the Souls only of some few of their unfortunate Companions. But the wicked Principles which are propagated by Books are lasting Mischiefs, from whence, as from a *Pandora's Box*, fly out those Plagues and Mortal Diseases that can never be recall'd, and will spread Destruction and Ruine amongst the Souls of Men to the World's End.

And indeed it is hard to say, what Measures of Repentance may be sufficient for these Men. The Repentance they must come to, or be everlastingly and immeasurably Undone, must be such as comes not under the ordinary Definitions given that great Condition of our Salvation. It is not a private Grief and Sorrow, nor barely an Amendment for the future, will be sufficient to reconcile such to God. But as the Dishonours done to the Great Creator, by their means, are never likely to end, but with the World; so the Reparations to be made for these kind of Affronts and Injuries to Christ's Kingdom must be by a Recantation as publick and lasting as the Nature

ture of the Offence is. And the exacting of such a Repentance as this, I must needs recommend to you, *my Brethren*, who are entring to day into the *Ministry*, when-ever you are called to the Sick Bed of any notorious Atheist or Deist whatsoever. And this was the Resolution of a very eminent Bishop of our Church, in the Case of one of a considerable figure amongst them, after he had written his Book *de Veritate*. You are the Stewards of the Mysteries of God, so that you cannot, with Fidelity to your Great Master, dispence the Sacrament of Reconciliation to those, who have erected lasting Batteties against his Kingdom, till they themselves, by a like publick Recantation, shall have pull'd them down with their own hands. So that you see the very Repentance of those, who shall *Turn many to Unrighteousness*, is a hard and fearful Discipline. And what then? How much beyond the common Measures will the Punishment of those amongst them be, who shall remain Impenitent? And indeed it is but reasonable to believe, that the Case will be vastly different betwixt those who have only in their own Persons transgress the Laws of God, and such who make a Party, and fight the Devil's Battels against Him. These Men must be supposed to be first

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at perfect Enmity with Him, and their whole Nature must be envenom'd against Him; and therefore it cannot be expected but that the *Fury of his Wrath*, and the very *Dregs of his Anger* will be poured out against such.

And now, if of all other Sinners those will be the most exquisitely punish'd, who shall any ways corrupt and deprave the Principles and Manners of Mankind; then, by parity of Reason, *of all the Righteous Servants of God*, those will be exalted to the highest degrees of Glory, who shall be most industrious in the Instruction and Conversion of Men; or shall lay the Foundation of Christian Knowledge, or Contribute toward the Promoting of it. For this we need no other Testimony than that remarkable place of St. James v. 20. *Know, that he which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall cover a Multitude of Sins.* These Words speak such a Regard to the Charitable Endeavours of those who do any ways promote, or do Labour in the Instruction and Conversion of Sinners, that through the Merits and Satisfaction of Christ, (by which only it is that God becomes propitious to our best Performances) this kind of Charity will be had in no mean Consideration when God shall take Cognizance of our Sins and

and Failures. And if the Converting of one Sinner shall be so consider'd, what Glories will await those who *Turn many to Righteousness*? I cannot possibly express them in any higher Words than those of my Text, in which alone there is a force and lustre, like to the Rewards themselves which they bespeak.

And proportionably as the Assistances given to *Turn many to Righteousness* shall be most extensive and lasting; in the same measure we must suppose the degrees of Glory will be allotted to such Piety. And therefore, since, next to what the Apostles did by their personal Labours, and inspir'd Writings, to Convert Mankind to God, scarcely any thing can be thought of a more direct and immediate Tendency to the same Glorious and Blessed End, than to lay up those Magazines of Christian Knowledge on the Confines of Satan's Kingdom, out of which the Ministers of God's Word may be constantly supply'd, both with the Food of Souls, and with that Spiritual Armour wherewith they may carry on the War with Success, so as at length to drive that Arch-Rebel out of those vast Territories he now possesses: It will therefore follow, that those pious Persons will most effectually consult their future Happiness,

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and provide best for an Exalted Glory, who shall expend most in fixing Libraries of necessary and useful Books in Divinity, in order to the Instruction both of Minister and People. Such indeed cannot be said, by so doing, to hazard their Persons in the Converting of Mankind, and so may not be entitled thereby to the Reward of *Martyrs* and *Confessors*. But however, they may be much more instrumental in *Turning many to Righteousness*, even than those who actually labour in the Work it self, because that, in effect, it will be they who shall *Preach, Catechize, and Instruct* those Parts of the World, as well in future, as in the present Age. It is they will be the Fountain, we shall be only the Conduit-Pipes through which the Waters of Life will be convey'd to 'the People: And therefore, except we shall bestir our selves very much, they will far out-strip us in the Pursuit of Eternal Glory.

In short, Those who shall make such a lasting Provision for the Instruction and Conversion of any considerable part of Mankind, may, in so doing, be very well look'd upon as a sort of *Apostles* to those Parts of the World. And if so, we may conclude a
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great deal concerning the Degrees of Glory wherewith such shall be recompenc'd, from that Promise of our Saviour to his Apostles, *Matt. xix. 28. Verily, I say unto you, When the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon Twelve Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel:* For tho' we are not to conclude from these Words, that any besides the Twelve shall be exalted to the highest Degrees of Happiness, yet from hence we may clearly gather, that proportionably as Persons shall approach nearest to the Apostles in Evangelizing Mankind, they shall be placed nearer and nearer to them upon the several Ascents, to the highest Stations in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Not that I would lessen the Hopes of Glory to you, *my Brethren*, who shall labour in this Great and Glorious Work, of *Gaining Souls to God*. No, but rather give me leave, with the great Apostle to the Gentiles, *Rom. xi. 13. to magnifie to you your Office*, who are entering to day upon the Sacred Ministry, and some of you in order to a ~~a~~ Blessed Mission. And you have this Advantage of all other Professions of Men, that whereas others, by a due discharge of the Duties of their proper Calling, can only

become Righteous themselves, you, in the due Exercise of your Ministry, will *Turn many to Righteousness*: So that whilst other Christians can expect only the common Rewards for well-doing, you may promise your selves, upon the Performance even of the ordinary Duties of your Function, to be extraordinarily recompenc'd. And the Reason is this, because the Good that you will do is doubly and trebly beneficial; for you will not only consult thereby your own Happiness, but will render your selves Benefactors to Mankind, and what is above all, will enlarge the Bounds of Christ's Kingdom.

I say you will render your selves Benefactors to Mankind. For why? the Religion you are to propagate and promote, is of such a Nature and Tendency, that were it heartily embrac'd, the most Wild and Savage of Men would become Innocent, Kind, and Sociable to one another; they would not hurt nor destroy in all the Holy Mountain. And it is Prophecy'd, that this will be the Fruits of Christianity, when *the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord*, *Isai. xi. 9.* And you will also, by a diligent Application to the Duties of your proper Calling, pull down the Kingdom

Kingdom of Satan, and enlarge the Bounds of Christ's Kingdom, or at least-wise encrease the Number of his faithful Subjects.

This will indeed engage you in great Conflicts with the Powers of Darkness; and the Difficulties and Oppositions they and their Agents, the wicked Men of the World, shall give you, will call forth all your Courage and Prudence to resist. But the greater are the Dangers and Difficulties, the more noble is the Vertue; and the greater the Vertue, the more glorious will be the Reward.

And therefore I cannot forbear to bless that Providence which calls both you and me into the Service of those darker parts of the Church, where we shall have occasion to do more Good than here we could be able, to contest with greater Difficulties, and thereby to entitle ourselves to the chiefest Rewards. For as bad as it is to be Ambitious after Earthly Honours, it is nobly Vertuous, and Christian-like, an Emulation to excell in the Favour of God, and in those Stations of Glory which he will bestow upon such as shall exert themselves in his Service. And to be Instrumental in bringing Light to them that sit in Darknes, and in the Shadow of Death, whether we consider the Service, or the
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Recompence, has enough in it to satisfy the most pious Ambition.

To conclude therefore in the Words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 12. *Fight the good Fight of Faith*, that is, maintain and propagate the Gospel against all Opposition, and live according to it; *lay hold on Eternal Life*, nay, strive to excell in those Achievements that shall entitle you to the chiefest Glories of it; for this is that *whereunto you are called*, and are now to *profess this good Profession* at an Holy Ordination *before many Witnesses*.

F I N I S.

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